

and part of it, of course, is making sure our homeland is secure. If you have any questions on the NSA decision, I'll be glad to give it to you—be glad to answer them.

The other part of the offense—of the strategy is to stay on the offense, is to keep them on the run. And to this end, I want to thank you for supporting our Guard troops. Many of you have been overseas and have seen our Guard troops in action. And I can't thank you enough for not only supporting the troops in harm's way but providing great comfort to their families as well.

Ultimately, the defeat of the terrorists is not only defeat them overseas so we don't have to face them here at home but as well, it's to spread liberty and freedom. And the freedom agenda is a powerful part of our country's desire to lay the foundation for peace. And it's making a difference. It's making a difference. I know one of the debates about the freedom agenda is, "Well, elections cause certain things to happen that you may not want to happen." No, elections are only the beginning of the process; they're not the end. Elections, plus a focused foreign policy effort that helps build the institutions of democracy, is what is going to be necessary to ultimately defeat the hateful ideology of those who would do our country harm.

It's an interesting debate that's going to take place here in Washington, or is taking place in Washington: Do elections cause radicalism or empower radicals? My answer is, the status quo empowered radicals. This notion that somehow the Middle East was a safe place for the last 30 years—because we didn't see, kind of, the turmoil that happens with elections, meant we were safe, I just totally disagree with that, kind of the—beneath the surface that appeared placid, the policymakers, was resentment and hatred and planning and plotting, all of which came home on September the 11th.

And I believe this country has got to be aggressive in our pursuit of democracy and liberty, based upon our firm belief that there are such things as the natural rights of men and women. After all, that's what caused our founding, that there is universality to liberty. And we shouldn't be surprised when 11 million Iraqis go to the polls and demand freedom in the face of unbelievable terrorist at-

tacks. That shouldn't surprise America. We ought to say, we recognize that spirit. And it is that spirit that's ultimately going to be able to say, we've kept the peace for our children and grandchildren.

And so we can work together on these important issues, and I thank you for giving me a chance for me to come by and visit with you about them. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.

Proclamation 7984—Establishment of the African Burial Ground National Monument

February 27, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In Lower Manhattan, at the corners of Duane and Elk Streets, lies an undeveloped parcel of approximately 15,000 square feet that constitutes a remaining portion of New York City's early African Burial Ground. The site is part of an approximately 7-acre National Historic Landmark established on April 19, 1993. From the 1690s to the 1790s, the African Burial Ground served as the final resting place of enslaved and free Africans in New York City, New York. It contains the remains of those interred, as well as the archeological resources and artifacts associated with their burials. Prior to the date of this proclamation, the site was administered by the General Services Administration (GSA), and it will be the location of a memorial, to be constructed soon according to a design selected on April 29, 2005, through a competition conducted by the GSA with the participation of the National Park Service (NPS) and other interested parties.

Whereas the African Burial Ground National Monument will promote understanding of related resources, encourage continuing research, and present interpretive opportunities and programs for visitors to better understand and honor the culture and vital contributions of generations of Africans and Americans of African descent to our Nation;

Whereas section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431) (the “Antiquities Act”) authorizes the President, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments, and to reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected;

Whereas it would be in the public interest to preserve the portion of the African Burial Ground at the corner of Duane and Elk Streets in New York City, and certain lands as necessary for the care and management of the historic and scientific objects therein, as the African Burial Ground National Monument;

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by the authority vested in me by section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431), do proclaim that there are hereby set apart and reserved as the African Burial Ground National Monument for the purpose of protecting the objects described above, all lands and interests in lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States with the boundaries described on the accompanying land description, which is attached and forms a part of this proclamation. The Federal land and interests in land reserved consist of approximately 15,000 square feet, which is the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects to be protected.

All Federal lands and interests of lands within the boundaries of this monument are hereby appropriated and withdrawn from all forms of entry, location, selection, sale, or leasing or other disposition under the public land laws, including, but not limited to, withdrawal from location, entry, and patent under mining laws, and from disposition under all laws relating to mineral and geothermal leasing.

The Secretary of the Interior (Secretary), acting through the NPS, shall administer the national monument consistent with the pur-

poses and provisions of this proclamation and applicable laws and regulations governing management of units of the national park system. For the purposes of preserving, interpreting, and enhancing public understanding and appreciation of the national monument and its meaning to society, the Secretary, acting through the NPS, shall develop an inter-agency agreement with the Administrator of General Services and, within 3 years of the date of this proclamation, prepare a management plan for the national monument. The management plan shall, among other provisions, set forth the desired relationship of the national monument to other related resources, programs, and organizations in New York City and other locations, provide for maximum public involvement in its development, and identify steps to be taken to provide interpretive opportunities for the entirety of the National Historic Landmark and related sites in New York City. Further, to the extent authorized by law, the Secretary, acting through the NPS, shall promulgate any additional regulations needed for the proper care and management of the objects identified above.

The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights.

Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to revoke any existing withdrawal, reservation, or appropriation; however, the national monument shall be the dominant reservation.

Warning is hereby given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any lands thereof.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 1, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 2.

Proclamation 7985—Women's History Month, 2006

February 27, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

For generations, women across our great land have helped make our country stronger and better. They have improved our communities and played a vital role in achieving justice and equal rights for all our citizens. During Women's History Month, we celebrate the many contributions women make to our society.

At the end of the 19th century, pioneers Jane Addams and Ellen Starr opened the doors of Hull House to serve impoverished and immigrant families in the Chicago community. Presidential Medal of Freedom winner Annie Dodge Wauneka worked to educate her native Navajo community about preventing and treating disease. In 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama, helping to inspire a nationwide movement for equal justice under the law. Recently, our Nation said goodbye to another remarkable American woman and courageous civil rights leader, Coretta Scott King, who helped call America to its founding ideals.

Today, the United States of America remains a country that offers the greatest freedom on Earth and believes in the promise of all individuals. Women continue to strengthen our Nation and the world by excelling as leaders in all walks of life, including business, law, politics, family life, education, community service, science, medicine, and the arts. The brave women who wear the uniform of the United States Armed Forces are helping to lay the foundations of peace and freedom for generations to come. This month, I encourage all Americans to join me in celebrating the extraordinary achievements and contributions of American women.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2006 as

Women's History Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities to honor the history, accomplishments, and contributions of all American women.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

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Remarks at a Republican Governors Association Reception

February 27, 2006

The President. Thanks for the warm welcome. Be seated—unless you don't have a seat. [*Laughter*]

Mitt, thank you for that wonderful introduction. That columnist is pretty much alone in your State of Massachusetts—[*laughter*]—but I appreciate it. Appreciate your leadership of the RGA. I want to thank Sonny. I call him “Big Buddy Perdue.” [*Laughter*] He is a big buddy. And I want to thank Matt Blunt as well and Melanie and Ann Romney. Thank you all very much for taking a strong leadership role.

One of the things you find out about successful Governors is they marry well. Same thing happens for Presidents. [*Laughter*] And I am married really well.

I want to thank you all for supporting people who know how to get things done. You know, in our line of work there's a lot of talkers—sometimes there's not many doers; a lot of people who have got opinions, but oftentimes people can't roll up their sleeves and achieve agendas. And the folks you're supporting here today are people who know how to set agendas, make decisions based upon principle, and get things done on behalf of our country by running their State. Thank you for supporting them, and thank the Governors for being such strong leaders.